

The Philip Derenberger House
Near Springtown, Washington Township
Morris County, New Jersey
MIDDLE VALLEY VICINITY

HABS-NJ-633

HABS
NJ
14-MIDVA
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS
N.J.
14. MIDVA. V
2-

The Philip Derenberger House*
Near Springtown, Washington Township
Morris County, New Jersey

Owner: J.H. Hopkins, 157 Third Street, Newark, N.J.

Date of Erection: About 1800

Architect: Unknown

Builder: Philip Derenberger (1762-1852)

Present Condition: Original

Number of Stories: One and one-half and cellar

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone masonry

Exterior walls - stone masonry
stuccoed in imitation of
coursed ashlar

Interior walls - lath and
plaster on wood studding

Chimneys - brick, built
into inside of gable ends

Roof - gable, wood shingled

Historical Data:

By a deed of 29 May 1799 Timothy Collver and wife Martha of Washington Township, Morris County, conveyed to Philip Derenberger of the same place for 600 pounds (dollars being at the rate of 75 shillings 6 pence each) an irregular tract of 224 acres there

*The germanic surname Durabercher, Doerberger, etc. appears anglicised as Durenberger, Dernberger, and Derenberger in the records of Morris County.

extending over a mile south from the "road from Mineral Spring to Dutch Valley" (now County road number 9, the two places being the present villages of Schooley's Mountain and Long Valley), assembled from part of the tract which grantor had received by the will of his father, Robert Collver decd., with additions to it by conveyances from Adam Sager, John Braithwaite, and George Beaty. The tract conveyed was cut into upper and lower halves by the old road from Morristown to Easton, Penna., (locally, Springtown to Pleasant Grove) in an east-west direction across its narrow axis.

Philip Derenberger extended his holdings by purchase of 50 acres from (his first cousin) John Sager and his wife Elizabeth of the same place by deed of 5 May 1810 for \$1200, which tract the grantor had received by deed of 27 Feb. 1802 from his parents Adam* and Elisabeth (Derenberger) Sager. This addition along his eastern line and the south side of the road last mentioned provided a frontage on the road leading northwest from the village of Middle Valley, and at the forks formed by the intersection of these two roads stands the house here considered. Philip Derenberger who lived in this house, died there on 8 May 1852 aged 90 years, son of Philip and Dorothea (Swackhamer) Derenberger, and grandson of Stephen Derenberger who came from Germany to Philadelphia in 1738 and to this "German Valley" region (then a part of Roxbury Township) where he died having a will proved 23 January 1776.(a)

In his will dated 11 June 1825, Philip Derenberger abovesaid devised to his son John the 93 acre farm on which the latter then resided, being "all the land which I now own lying on the right or north side of the road leading from James Wilsons to Joseph Colyers."** To his daughter Esther wife of James Wilson he devised a meadow lot near the latter's house and "on the right side of the road leading from the house I now live into the said James Wilson. #

*Adam Sager's house surveyed as NJ-626 stands about 500 feet north of the one here considered.

(a) N.J. Archives 1st series, vol. 34, p. 155

** The road to Pleasant Grove

#The road to Middle Valley

To his son Jacob he devised 120 acres to be set off the "southwest side of the Homestead Farm where I now live" and to be adjacent to lands he now owns, "the north side of which tract.....when run does not come with 5 chains of the southerly side of the house where I now live." To his son William Derenberger he devised the balance of the real estate. To his wife Anna he devised "one-half of the House where I now live, that is to say the two north-east rooms* commonly called the Store Room and Kitchen together with the one-half of the cellar and chamber over and under the same" with the garden and potatoe patch adjoining, during her widowhood, with other provisions for her maintenance by the son William. Bequests to daughters Elizabeth Hess and Mary Fritts are made.(b)

Philip Derenberger, the testator above-named, lived for 27 years after drawing the will and it was proved 3 June 1852. Meanwhile, after

*Rooms nos. 1 and 4 on first floor plan

(b) By his wife Mary Ann Hann, b. 4 Oct. 1761; d. 2 Aug. 1832, Philip Derenberger had issue; 1. Jacob b. 1786 d. 1868, m. 15 Dec. 1810 Rachel Fritts; 2 John b. 17 May 1791, d. 1 June 1874, m. 21 Jan. 1813 Polly Dufford; 3. William B. 8 Sept. 1802, d. 27 Apr. 1879, m. Julia Ann Coleman; 4. Elisabeth m. Jonah Hess of Drakestown; 5. Anna Mary b. 10 June 1809, m. George Fritts; and 6. Esther m. James Wilson of Elizabeth, N. J. (Theo. F. Chambers, Early Germans of New Jersey, publ. 1895, page 526) In that reference book, this surname is anglicised as "Terryberry" but it is properly dbernberger or Derenberger as found in the land and probate records.

the death of his wife in 1832, he divided his real estate among his sons Jacob, John, and William by deeds of 7 and 17 October 1834, in confirmation of the devises to them made in the will. The son William Derenberger thus came into possession of the middle 114 acres of the paternal homestead farm, including the house here considered. Jacob the lower 139 acres, and John the upper 93. The Atlas of Morris County published in 1868 shows a map of Washington Township on which a house identical in location with the one here surveyed is indicated in the forks of the road from Springtown west to Pleasant Grove and south to Middle Valley, also a house across the latter road from that house, and a third further south on that road, all three labelled "W. Derenberger".

In the will of this William Derenberger of Washington Township, who died 27 April 1879, the use of "the homestead farm on which I now live containing 130 acres". is devised to his wife Julia Ann during her widowhood, and afterward the property is bequeathed to the daughter Marilda wife of Jacob Rice and entailed to their children. To the daughters Lucinda wife of William Martinis is devised the 184 acre farm on which she then resided, and to Marilda Rice abovesaid is given the use of the house and lot then occupied by her, the same to be sold after the decease of testator's widow. She died 10 October 1890.

Accordingly, by deed of 31 March 1900, three of the residuary legatees conveyed to their brother John Rice of this Washington Township, (being the children of Jacob and Marilda Rice) their 3/4 interest in the "Homestead Farm of William Derenberger deceased" for \$1500, being 125 acres. On 5 December 1925 Louisa Rice of Washington Township, widow of John Rice abovenamed, conveyed the same to John H. Sliker of Newark, New Jersey. His heirs passed title to the farm to John Ekman and wife Mary of Brooklyn, N. Y., on 4 August 1928, and these grantees passed it to Adam Obringer and wife Florence of Jersey City on 21 March 1933, from whom it went back to Mary Ekman of the same address by their deed of 3 April 1934, and from her to Frederick H. Pilch

of Bloomfield, New Jersey, nine days later. The house is now owned by J. H. Hopkins of 157 Third Street, Newark, New Jersey, and leased to Clinton C. Gilbert of West Orange, New Jersey.

Bibliography:

A search of Land and Probate records
at Morris County by Cornelius Mc
Phillips, H.A.B.S. title abstractor

Architectural Analysis:

This unpretensions single unit stone masonry farm house, typical of those in this region of Morris County, exhibits the thriftyness and solidity natural to its German-American builder. Hallway, open stair case, dormer windows, and service wings were discarded as unnecessary to practical requirements, resulting in the charm of architectural simplicity. The comparatively modern stuccoed facing of the masonry walls, pointed in imitation of formally coursed dressed stone, adds a degree of inharmonious elegance, a treatment applied also to the nearby house of Adam Sager (NJ-626). The mantel piece in room number 2, its details indicating early 19th century origin, is unexpectedly elaborate, as likewise are the panelled doors and the chair-rail.

Lewis D. Cook
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

(How)